

THE LAST

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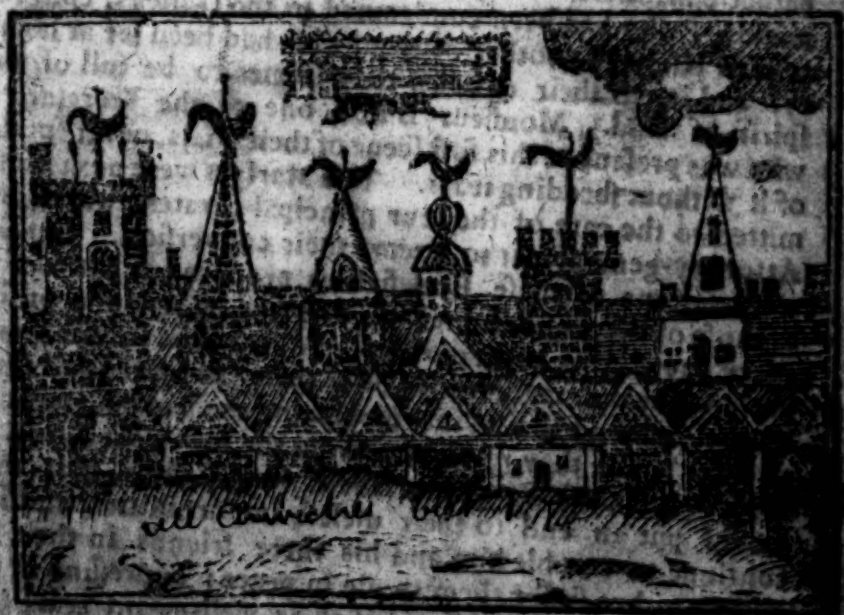
SPEECH and TESTIMONY

Of the Rév. Mr. ROCHETTE, and the
three Noblemen that were Martyred with
him, at Thoulouse, the 19th of February,
1762. for being Protestants viz.

GUY DE BOYLLERE, Monsiur DE LA BRETS, Monf.
LE HIRE.

To which is added

A Hymn delivered at the place of Execution.



Printed For Robert Robertson, Flying Stationer.

A LETTER, &c.

THE only resource we have now left is, to let our tears flow, and to render our sorrow supportable by giving it a free course. The day before yesterday the prisoners were tried by the Two Chambers of the Parliament of Thoulouse, and yesterday they were executed. The three Noblemen were beheaded. All the four Martyrs behaved with invincible constancy and firmness of mind, attended with a certain chearfulness and serenity, that was adapted to excite the highest admiration. They finished their days, like true saints and christian heroes. As soon as they heard their sentence read, they beheld each other stedfastly, and said, "Let us then die, since things are so! And let us pray to God to accept the sacrifice that we are now to make of our lives to him and to the truth." Upon which Mr. Rochette prayed aloud in a most moving and pathetic manner. They then embraced two of their companions, who had been condemned to the Gallies, congratulated tenderly another of them who had been set at liberty, and in all their conduct they seemes to be full of the spirit of God. Monsieur Billot, one of the Secretaries, who was present at this first scene of their trials, never speaks of it without shedding tears. The Martyrs were next committed to the care of the four principal curates, whom the Attorney-general sent to attempt their conversion. But the exhortations of these Ecclesiastics produced as little effect as those of the Abbe Coutezac, who had been in the prison every day during three months, and had been so often empowered by the magistrates to offer them their lives and their liberty, on condition of their embracing the Romish religion, an offer which they rejected without the least hesitation.

Mr. Rochette begged of these Ecclesiastics, that they would put an end to their useless importunities, and not continue to trouble him and his three friends in their last moments, but suffer them to die in peace; expressing at the same time, his grateful sense of their well-meant zeal. One of the curates threatened him and his companions with damnation, upon which the worthy Ministers replied, with his usual serenity, "That they were going to appear before a

more equitable judge than he was, even before that merciful judge, who had shed his blood for their salvation." At the same time he exhorted his fellow-martyrs to fortitude and perseverance; and when the curates interrupted him with accusations of heresy, and with pompous discourses about the power of granting the remission of sins, which was lodged in the church, he told them, that the Protestant religion acknowledged no such power, nor looked for pardon of sin from any other source, than the mercy of God in Jesus Christ.

Being delivered, about two o'clock, from the importunity of these Priests, the pious martyr employed those precious moments in prayer and praises to the God who enabled them to behold death without terror or dismay, and encouraged each other to persevere unto the end. So calm and undisturbed was the state of their minds, that they did not shed a single tear. But this was not the case with the persons who were the spectators of this moving scene. While these good men thanked the centinels and keepers of the prison for the kind treatment they had received from them, and asked their pardon if they had given them any offence, the latter burst into tears, and shed the anguish of humanity upon the martyrdom of their prisoners. The minister perceiving one of the soldiers weeping still more bitterly than the rest, addressed himself to him thus; "My good friend, are you not willing and ready to die for your King? Why then do you pity me, who am going to death for the cause of God?"

The priests returned to their importunities about one o'clock in the afternoon, and were entreated to retire; but to no purpose. One of them said, "It is from a concern about your salvation that we come here;" upon which the youngest of the three brothers replied: "If you were at Geneva, at the point of death, in consequence of a mortal disease) would you chuse to be teased and importuned in your last moments by four or five protestant ministers under pretence of zeal? Do therefore as you would be done by." This mild remonstrance was insufficient to put an end to the vain and cruel attempts of these blind zealots, who, furnished each with a crucifix, which they presented from time

to time to the prisoners, continued to perplex them in the most indiscreet manner. "Speak of him (said one of the noblemen who was to suffer) who died for our sins and was raised for our justification, and then we will listen to you, but do not trouble us with your vain superstitions."

About two o'clock the martyrs were led out of prison, placed in a waggon, with the four curates, and thus conducted to the gate of the Cathedral. Here the minister was desired to step out of the waggon, and to ask pardon, on his knees, of God, the king, and the law, in that he had wickedly persevered in performing the functions of his ministry, in opposition to the royal edicts. This he twice refused to do. He was told that this was no more than a formality; to which he answered, "That he neither would acknowledge nor submit to any formality that was contrary to the dictates of his conscience." At length, however, being obliged, by force and violent treatment, to leave the waggon, he fell upon his knees, and expressed himself thus: "I humbly ask of Almighty God the pardon of all my sins, in the full persuasion of obtaining the remission of them, through the blood of Christ. With respect to the king, I have no pardon to ask of him, having never offended him. I always honoured him as the Lord's anointed; I always loved him as the father of my country; I have always been to him a good and faithful subject, and of this my judges themselves have appeared to be fully convinced; I always recommended to my flock patience, obedience and submission, and my sermons have always been confined to the two great objects, contained in these words of holy writ, *Fear God, and honour the King*. If I have acted in opposition to the laws, that prohibited our religious assemblies, I did this in obedience to the laws of him, who is the King of Kings. With respect to public justice, I have rothng to say but this, that I never offended it, and I most earnestly pray that God will vouchsafe to pardon my judges." This was the only confession that the officers of justice, after much importunity and contestation, could obtain from Monsieur Rochette; and, though it did not answer their purpose, yet they weare obliged to be satisfied with it, perceiving the in-

vincible resolution with which this noble martyr protested against going any further. No such *acknowledgement* was required of the three noblemen, who suffered with him, as by the laws of France it is never demanded of such as are beheaded. They were, however, conducted with Monsieur Rochette to the place of execution. The ordinary place appointed for the execution of criminals was not chosen upon this occasion, but one much less spacious, that this glorious instance of martyrdom might have the fewer spectators. All the streets which led to it were lined with soldiers, and that on account of the pretended apprehension of a risée. But this they could only fear from the Roman Catholics; (on whom indeed the shedding thus deliberately the blood of the innocent seemed to make a lively impression) for the small number of protestant families that live in this city, filled with consternation at this unrighteous sentence, had shut themselves up in their houses, where they were wholly employed in sending up their prayers and lamentations to heaven, while this terrible scene was transacting. In the streets, which led to the place of execution, the windows were hired at very high prices, wherever the martyrs passed, they were accompanied with the tears and lamentations of the spectators. One would have thought, by the expressions of sorrow that appeared every where, that Thoulouse was, all of a sudden, become a protestant city. The curate of *Faur* could not bear this affecting spectacle. Yielding to the power of sympathy (and perhaps of conscience) he fainted away, and one of his vicars was sent for to supply his place. The circumstance that was most affecting, and that made every eye melt into tears, was the inexpressible serenity that appeared in the countenance of the young clergyman, as he went on to death. His graceful mien, the resignation and fortitude that reigned in his expressions, his blooming youth every thing, in short, in his conduct, character and appearance, interested all ranks of people in his favour, and rendered his fate the subject of universal affliction. This affliction was augmented by one particular circumstance, even its being universally known, that Monsieur Rochette might have saved his life by an untruth, but refused to hold it at so dear a rate; for as his being a minister was his only crime,

and as there were no complaints made against him, no advertisements describing his person, nor any witnesses to prove his pastoral character, he had only to deny his being a minister and his life was saved; but he chose rather to lose his life than deny his profession. He was the first of the four that was executed; and in the face of death he exhorted his companions to perseverance, and sung those sublime verses of the 118th Psalm,

This is the day God made, in it

We'll joy triumphant y.

Save now, I pray thee, Lord, I pray

Send now prosperity.

Blessed is he, in God's great name

That cometh us to save;

We, from the house which to the Lord

Pertains, you blessed have.

When the executioner, among others, conjured him to die a Roman Catholic, the minister answered him in this gentle manner. "Judge, Friend, which of the two is the best religion, that which persecutes, or that which is persecuted." He added, that his grandfather, and one of his uncles, had died for the pure religion of the Gospel, and that he would be the third Martyr of his family. Two of the three gentlemen, that suffered with him, beheld him tied to the gibbet with an amazing intrepidity; but the third, covered his eyes with his hand, that he might not see such a spectacle. The commissioners of the Parliament, and the Deputies of the other courts of justice, discovered, by their pensive looks and downcast eyes, how deeply they were affected upon this occasion. The three brothers embraced each other tenderly, and recommended mutually their departing souls to the Father of Spirits. Their heads were struck off at three blows. When the scene was finished, the spectators returned to their respective homes, in a solemn silence, reflecting on the fate of innocence and virtue, and scarcely able to persuade themselves, that the world could present such a spectacle of magnanimity, and such an instance of cruelty, as they had been just beholding.

The Following Hymn was delivered by Monsieur
ROCHETTE, to the Executioner, at the place of
Execution, the 19th of February 1762.

GLORY to thee, my God this night,
For all the blessings of the light,
Keep me, O keep me, King of Kings,
Under thy almighty wings,
Forgive me Lord for thy dear Son,
The ill that I this day have done,
That with the world, myself, and thee,
I, e'er I sleep, at peace may be.

Teach me to live, that I may dread,
The grave as little as my bed;
Teach me to die, that so I may
Triumphing rise at the last day.

O may my soul on thee repose,
And with sweet sleep my eye-lids close,
Sleep which may me more vig'rous make,
To serve my God when I awake.

When in the night I sleepless lie,
My soul with heavenly thoughts supply,
Let no ill dreams disturb my rest,
No powers of darkness me molest,
Dull sleep offense me to deprive.

I am but half my days alive;
Thy faithful lovers, Lord, are griev'd,
To lie so long of thee bereav'd.

But tho' sleep o'er my frailty reigns
Let it not hold me long in chains;
And now and then let loose my heart,
Till it an Hallelujah dart.

The faster sleep the sense does bind,
The more unfetter'd is the mind;
O may my soul from matter free,

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Till it an Hallelujah dart.

The faster sleep the sense does bind,
The more unfetter'd is the mind;
O may my soul from matter free,

Thy unvail'd goodness waking feet
To O when shall I in endless day,
For ever chase dark sleep away,
And endless praise with the heavenly choir,
Incessant sing, and never tire?

You, my blest guardian, whilst I sleep,
Close to my bed your vigils keep;
Divine love into me instill,
Stop all the avenues of ill.

Thought to thought with my soul converse,
Celestial joys to me rehearse,
And in my stead all the night long,
Sing to my God a grateful song.

Praise God from whom all blessings flow,
Praise him all creatures here below,
Praise him above ye angelic host,
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

